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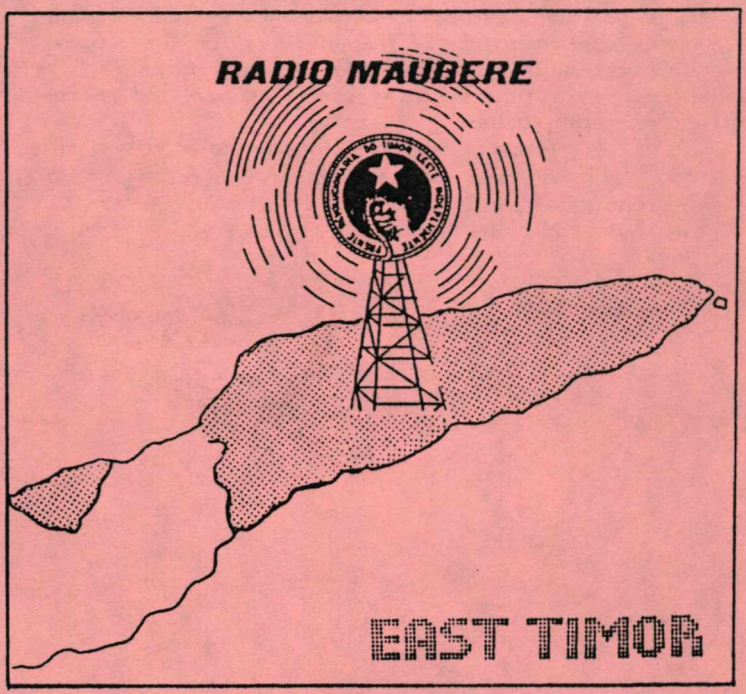
Exchange of Messages with FRETILIN



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tapol British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia.
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Exchange of Messages with FRETILIN

On 21 October 1985, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, Commander-in-Chief of Falintil, the armed forces of FRETILIN (the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor), and Chairperson of the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance (CRRN), transmitted messages by radio to Lord Avebury, chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, and Carmel Budiardjo, Organising Secretary of TAPOL. The messages were in reply to messages transmitted to East Timor a month earlier.

We take pleasure in publishing the full texts of this exchange of messages, with thanks and appreciation to all those who made possible the re-establishment in May this year of the radio link between East Timor and Australia.

7 December, 1985

Message from Lord Avebury to Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao,

I am Eric Avebury, chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group in Britain, and a member of the House of Lords. To begin with, I send warmest greetings to the people of East Timor and congratulations on establishing radio contact with the outside world. It is absolutely vital for the friends of East Timor to have the best and most up-to-date information about the situation, if we are to fight alongside you for your human rights, including the right to self-determination. We want to know your economic situation, the way you are being treated by the Indonesian occupation forces, the exact details of the time, place and names of incidents involving violations of human rights.

In my work on the question of East Timor, I have tried to bring to the notice of my own government, of fellow Parliamentarians in democratic countries, and of the United Nations, the continued illegality of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. The UN has laid down principles governing the process of decolonisation in General Assembly Resolution 1514, which demands a plebiscite, or a vote of an assembly elected by universal franchise, to determine the political future of a colonial territory. This process was never completed in East Timor because the armed aggression of Indonesia brought the people's efforts to establish their own government to an abrupt end.

Now the United Nations has called on the Secretary General to use his good offices to find a solution, in consultation with all the parties concerned. We have continually pressed the Secretary General, and the governments of the countries which supported that resolution, to acknowledge that the people of East Timor themselves are the most important of all the parties, and we have asked what steps have been taken to consult you, either by means of a visit of the Secretary General or his representative to East Timor, or by extending an invitation to your leaders to meet him on neutral territory such as Australia. Maybe you could tell me whether any approach has been made to Fretilin on this important matter.

If the answer is that you have received no communication from the Secretary General, would you be prepared to invite him to meet you? And if so, could you let me know, so that I could pass this information on to the Secretary General. I realise that the military situation may make it difficult for him to visit East Timor, though it would be possible in theory for the UN to offer to arrange a truce, with perhaps a small UN force to monitor it. What would you think of that idea, or alternatively, would you agree to meet the Secretary General in Darwin, if he could guarantee safe passage out of East Timor and back again afterwards, for your representatives?

Please do let me know in what way you would like us to help you in your noble struggle. Four hundred and fifty Parliamentarians from 13 democratic countries have signed a declaration calling for the participation of your people in the decisions affecting their future, and we will not allow that cause to be lost. A great and important principle is at stake: the principle that national boundaries must not be altered by force. We fought a great war

against Hitler to assert that principle, and it is embodied in Chapter 4 of the United Nations Charter. If the world allows it to be violated now, millions will have sacrificed their lives in vain. Keep up your struggle - you are fighting not just for the rights of East Timor, but for the peace and security of the whole of mankind.

Message from Xanana Gusmao to Lord Avebury

We received your message with great joy and emotion. The plea for us to continue with our struggle lives in our hearts and will pulsate in our veins until we have defeated the mighty aggressor and vile power occupying our homeland. It is in the name of the martyred people of East Timor and the brave guerrillas of Fretilin and the CRRN that we express our heartfelt gratitude for the unswerving support which you have devoted to our cause. The Maubere people's struggle is directed towards one objective, the liberation of our homeland. This struggle is in defence of our right to liberty and a path towards the democratic process of self-determination. We want peace and stability so that we can establish a free nation which is sovereign and independent.

The cowardly aggression against our homeland demands unimaginable sacrifices from our people. The continued occupation by Indonesia is leading to their gradual extermination. Therefore, just as in Europe when various nations struggled determinedly to defeat Hitler's forces, the people of East Timor draw strength from their children's blood, already spilt, and the solidarity of just men and women, pacifists and those who are in the forefront in defence of the universal principles proclaimed in the UN Charter. The righteousness of our struggle, the determination of our people and the fervour of international support, form a secure base from which we can singlemindedly maintain our resistance against the genocidal war waged by Jakarta. The attitudes of the so-called realists from other countries condone the crimes committed by Jakarta. On the one hand, they protect the selfish interests of their own governments, and on the other, they justify the violations perpetrated against our people. Their views fundamentally contradict the principles upheld by the UN and the resolutions adopted by it.

As for the 40th General Assembly of the UN, we must say that if the member states fail to respect unconditionally the universal principles that have been proclaimed and to put their resolutions into practice, this organisation will continue to be manipulated by force. Moreover, it will neither assuage the anxieties of the people nor function as a juridical body capable of solving the conflicts provoked by despotic regimes, such as the one in Indonesia. In its capacity as the authentic arbiter and a truly practical and efficient body in international legal disputes, it can free small and weak states from outside pressures, including the use of force.

It is true that Humanity has survived forty years without a conflict as destructive as the Second World War, whose forces were involved in a supreme international effort. It is true that in the forty years since its

establishment, the UN has ensured that a people's right to self-determination and national independence could prevail. Thus, the gradual emancipation of territories under colonial rule has been guaranteed, a worthy achievement in its own right. Nevertheless, in our view, apart from a few exceptions, the colonised nations have turned to armed struggle in order to win their independence. Within months of their victory, they have often been threatened by outside powers.

While not wanting to decry the good intentions and praiseworthy efforts of these individuals, we feel that the emergence of the Contadora or Lima groups in Central America, the Frontline States in southern Africa or even the Jordanian initiative, only serve to highlight the inability of the UN to solve certain conflicts. In our case, Indonesia, with all the means to exert pressure on us, has been able to continue with impunity its genocidal war against the defenceless Maubere people. They have also been able to assert their influence over other states who might have behaved more responsibly and with a greater sense of justice to defend their political principles.

For example, we notice how the Australians have sacrificed our rights in exchange for good relations with Jakarta and for access to the waters off the southern coast of East Timor for oil exploration. We even know of cases where governments sell arms to the Indonesians. For them, the war is only the means for making greater profits. As a consequence, our people pay with their blood. Meanwhile, other European governments, in fulfilment of economic agreements, lend their support to Indonesia, or at least they don't lift a finger in defence of the principles they claim to uphold. And even the UN representative handling our case has been so loyal to the Indonesians that he has denied the Maubere people a place at the conference table, thus leaving us bereft of our freedom of speech, the right to negotiate as the party whose interests are most at stake, on a subject which affects our lives, our very existence as human beings and as a people.

Despite everything, Lord Avebury, we have decided to continue with our struggle against the power which has in so cowardly and criminal a fashion occupied our homeland. Furthermore, we shall confront the belated or indifferent responses of other governments. Above all, we are conscious of the fact that this is our own struggle. We want to be free and independent.

In the face of the formidable difficulties surrounding our struggle, Lord Avebury, we recognise from the very depths of our souls the great and incontestable loyalty of our friends. We ask that they continue to support East Timor and to persuade governments to change their policies and support the UN Secretary General's efforts to find a just solution for a firm and lasting peace in East Timor. We would also like to add that, as far as we know, neither the UN nor its Secretary General has attempted to make contact with Fretilin. We would therefore fully agree to the suggestions you have presented to us. We feel that a meeting between Fretilin and the Secretary General would be a necessary development in our campaign and an important step towards ending the suffering of the Maubere people. With regard to the prospect of a visit to East Timor by the Secretary General, we declare that there are no preconditions for this on our part because we want to ensure that the Secretary General is free to fulfil the task entrusted to him by the UN General Assembly. We also declare that there are no preferences on our

part regarding the choice of locale. The meeting could be held in Dili, or the Secretary General can go to any town in the interior of the country readily within our reach. If the Secretary General were unable to come to East Timor, we would be amenable to having a delegation of ours meet him in Darwin.

We are extremely grateful for the sentiments expressed by you, Lord Avebury, and we accept your kind offer. We hereby agree to the extension of a formal invitation to the Secretary General to meet with Fretilin leaders. The meeting could take place in East Timor or abroad, providing that, in the latter case, the delegation can enjoy the security due to them during their travels.

We know ...[the message is garbled for a few words] the facts of this initative, but we have absolute faith in our belief that you, Lord Avebury, will spare no effort in support of the heroic effort of our people. Your affirmation, Lord Avebury, that no-one must consider ours a lost cause does not just provide moral comfort. It holds inestimable significance for us as we conclude the tenth year of our resistance to the power which has brutally occupied our homeland. As you have made us realise, one struggle may also lead to greater peace and stability for all human beings.

We ask you, Sir, to send our deepest gratitude to all the illustrious Parliamentarians who have had no hesitation in taking the side of the Maubere people, providing them with vital support. The Maubere nation is small and weak, poor and defenceless, unprotected and ill-treated. For this reason, we need the continued support of other individuals, groups, organisations and governments - lovers of Peace, Liberty, Justice and Progress - so that we, the people of East Timor, can be our true selves, to master our own land and forge our destiny. Your support will be even more vital once the war has ended.

Forgive our presumption if we have made too many demands on you. However, we are certain that you and other illustrious men and women will continue to promote the campaigns already in progress, so that our people can take their rightful place in the negotiations which will affect their future.

The Maubere people will never forget these magnanimous gestures; this support is increasingly integral to their struggle for national liberation.

A free homeland or death!
Resistance is victory!
The struggle continues on all fronts!

Message from Carmel Budiardjo to Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao

This is Carmel Budiardjo speaking to you from London. I work for TAPOL and I send warmest greetings to you in your struggle against the Indonesian military who are illegally occupying your country. In case you dont know, 'tapol' is an abbreviation of 'tahanan politik' which means 'political prisoner' in Indonesian. I used to live in Indopnesia but after three years in prison as a tapol, I was deported and returned to Britain which is where I was born.

TAPOL campaigns against all the numerous human rights violations committed by the Indonesian military regime inside Indonesia as well as in West Papua and East Timor. Our TAPOL Bulletin comes out every two months and is read in many countries. It always contains a lot of information about East Timor, about the atrocities and about the military situation. We have used many of the reports you have sent out in the past few months and were delighted to hear that the two-way radio link was established. We congratulate you on this major achievement.

The tenth anniversary of your declaration of independence and of the Indonesian invasion ten days later will soon be here, so we in TAPOL would very much like to have a message from you which we will publish in our November bulletin. Most of TAPOL's work is concentrated on disseminating information and trying to persuade politicians and governments here in the West to support your righteous cause. We need to explain over and over again how the militarists who seized power in 1965 under General Suharto have committed bestial crimes not only against you in East Timor but also against people throughout Indonesia. It has become a country governed by a gang of murderers. Although Indonesians are not able to say anything publicly about the war against East Timor, I know there are many who condemn 'integrasi' and who get great inspiration from you.

Many of us in western Europe, in different organisations, are working to support your right to self-determination - in Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, France, West Germany, Switzerland, Holland and the United Kingdom. We meet regularly to discuss and plan our activities. Most governments in this part of the world only want to see Indonesia as a market for their exports and a profitable arena for capital investment, so they close their eyes to the reality of Indonesian rule while competing with each other to sell weapons to ABRI [the Indonesian Armed Forces].

Since Benny Murdani became ABRI commander, the predominance of RPKAD-trained officers [RPKAD = para-commandos] has become great than ever. Many regional commands and top positions in ABRI as well as in the state apparatus are now in the control of RPKAD men, most of whom have the blood of the East Timor on their hands. It is now acknowledged that active service in fighting the war against your people is the best guarantee for quick promotion in the Army, even though these 'nanggala' murderers have failed to defeat you after so many years of fighting.

I very much agree with your proposal that a team of independent obervers including Amnesty International representatives should visit East Timor to make a thorough investigation of conditions everywhere, but we all realise

how difficult this will be because of the Indonesian blockade and the unwillingness of western governments to press the Indonesian government to allow such a mission to take place.

Perhaps we should try to break the blockade the other way round, by receiving a mission from you, with people from the areas under your control and from the concentration camps, who can tell the world in their own words about conditions, and about the way the Indonesian military are violating your rights. I realise that such persons would almost certainly not be able to return home to continue the struggle, but the sacrifice of their loss to you might be worth while because of the impact such a visit could have on world opinion. I wonder what you think of such an idea.

In your reply, please do not hesitate to say what you would like us to do. There are many of us around the world who will spare no effort to help you in your struggle.

Message from Xanana Gusmao to Carmel Budiardjo

We send our warm fraternal greetings and our gratitude for TAPOL's solidarity in struggle. To all the members of TAPOL, we wish to say that we have the same enemy. The Indonesian militarists make no distinctions among their victims, in order to perpetuate their oppression over two fraternal peoples. We realise that the struggle of our people for the liberation of our homeland is part of the struggle of the fraternal people of Indonesia for the restoration of democratic liberties in their homeland. The fraternal people of Indonesia and the heroic people of East Timor are today both gagged in the same way, and in East Timor, their prison warders are not only the murderous nanggalas [knife-carrying soldiers, the term used by the Timorese for RPKAD troops] but the mighty killing machine of the bloodthirsty generals in Jakarta. The blood of hundreds of thousands of our people has flowed into the river of blood caused by the murder of millions of Indonesians. It is not an empty phrase nor a vain hope when we say that, because of our struggle, we believe that the democratic forces in Indonesia will recognise our determination, and will be able to find more adequate forms of recognising too our fundamental right to the independence of our homeland.

Indeed, the predominance of RPKAD officers in key positions [...] means incontestably that [...] but we believe that the Indonesian people will not allowed themselves to be fooled for ever by the Indonesian Army who say that 'ada program-program besar' [great (development) programmes are under way].

In our own country we are only too familiar with the bloody scenes of children crying and the horrifying screams of adults who have become real-life actors in the drama of these 'program-program', for it is in order to secure their implementation that at least one RPKAD battalion is stationed in each district, with RPKAD soldiers spread out even to the remote corners of our country. [The next sentence is garbled.]

However bad the atrocities perpetrated in Indonesia, those committed in our country are worse - against women, children, old people, young people,

against adults, against everyone, with the sole exception of the few servile lackeys who get everything they want.

Not only does the war situation in East Timor provide an opportunity for rapid promotion for ABRI officers. The best opportunity for promotion for RPKAD soldiers is the number of arrests and tortures and above all the number of massacres they perpetrate against our people. As a result, Kodim (district military command) officers even compete against each other and, in order to obtain faster promotion, encourage civil guards to cut off the heads of defenceless people living in the bush whom they capture, as evidence of their operations against the guerrillas. Moreover, if one nanggala captures five members of the population of a concentration camp, an intel official will capture six, and the kodim commander will order ten suspects to be fetched for torture. They all engage in a wild, bloody competition for the greatest number of prisoners that the war situation permits.

For Indonesian soldiers in general and for the nanggalas in particular, a Maubere citizen is nothing more than an animal for slaughter. Nevertheless, this has not succeeded in weakening for a single moment our determination to struggle until the enemy is defeated. On the contrary, this has inculcated in us a stronger will to continue the struggle and a clearer realisation of the need to liberate our homeland in order to liberate our people.

History has repeatedly shown us that unless the movement and the people of a country fight for their rights, governments that talk demagogically, their mouths full of principles and rights, will close their eyes to the violations of these principles and rights. Apartheid in South Africa for example has not worried, nor does it now worry, western governments any more than the dictatorships in Chile, Paraguay, the Philippines, Indonesia and so on upset them, causing them to devote some attention to these countries. We are well aware of this. If the brutal repression in South Africa today provokes comments and a certain degree of interest, with timid demands being made by some governments for sanctions, this is because the economic interests of these countries in South Africa are under threat. At root, it is not on behalf of the rights of the black population of South Africa that many western countries are now hesitantly and reluctantly using this rhetoric. What has made the difference is the qualitative development in the struggle of the Azanian people, the determination with which the black population of that country faces repression and death in order to defend their right to overthrow the intolerable white-minority, racist regime and the way it has won support from ever-growing international condemnation of the regime.

From the start of the Indonesian aggression, we realised that our struggle would be difficult and arduous, and that it would demand from all true nationalist patriots firmness of conviction and an unskakable will to struggle. Our national liberation struggle continues to be firm and will be increasingly so in the future. We are well aware of the military power of ABRI but our slogan is: Struggle, struggle, struggle until victory. The past ten years have shown the determination of our people to carry forward its resistance. The guerrillas of Fretilin know that they are dying for a sacred cause, the liberation of their country and of the Maubere people, and they accept the sacrifice of their lives with a smile of confidence, and with the courage which our ancestors displayed in the wars of independence. Although

subject to a blockade which seeks to cut all links with the outside world, the Maubere people have continued to direct their efforts to reinforcing steadily their heroic resistance, confident in the certainty of victory, and believing that we have contributed by our liberation struggle to the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the whole world.

Jakarta's brazen and stubborn refusal to lift the blockade of East Timor which is more effective than an iron curtain in preventing independent observers from coming into contact with the true condition of our people, is a crucially important aspect of our struggle. We call it crucial because it encapsulates all the contradictions and inconsistencies in Jakarta's propaganda and provides underlying testimony to the truth of our victories.

We therefore regard the idea that we should send a Fretilin delegation abroad as logical, and one which has many important implications. It would give us a better chance thoroughly and objectively to unmask not only Jakarta's lies but also the false image which all sorts of visitors who have been manipulated by the Indonesian generals have been trying to project around the world about the situation in East Timor.

We want to thank you in advance for any efforts you can make to this end in order that together, we may make it possible for the struggle of the Maubere people to make a significant advance towards a difficult but certain victory.

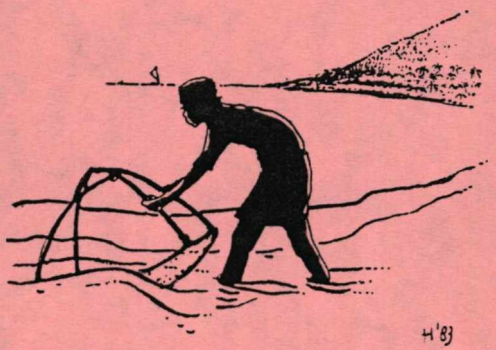
Abroad, the Maubere people will always value the support given by its friends, a necessary complement to the activities carried out by its external wing, the Fretilin External Delegation. We recognise that the militarist Indonesian regime has, in all respects, an overwhelming superiority in the unequal war that has been forced on our people, and for that reason, we continue to need your constant support to defend our rights, to publicise our struggle, to denounce the crimes committed by the forces of occupation, and to encourage international public opinion to wage a campaign of pressure on their respective governments to ensure that the people of East Timor are not denied their inalienable rights. This work also supports the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to work for a just solution of the conflict in the light of the principles laid down in the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

For our part, we affirm our complete solidarity with your struggle, the struggle of TAPOL, in the sincere conviction that now more than ever, the efforts of both of us should be better coordinated since the crossing of our paths has given us a common platform for our struggles. We stand in solidarity with the fraternal people of Indonesia, in solidarity with the democratic forces opposed to Jakarta's militaristic fascism, and in particular, in solidarity with the political prisoners, victims of the bloody regime, like our own people who have been herded into concentration camps.

The struggle continues on all fronts!
Homeland or death!
To resist is to win!

Indonesia....

ruled by repression and violence since General Suharto and the Army took power in 1965.



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